

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 6-13 are pending in the present application, Claims 6-13 having been amended, and Claims 1 and 3-5 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 6-13 are amended to overcome the objections raised in the outstanding Office Action and to be written in independent form. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is added and no new search is required. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the present amendment be entered.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 4 and 10-13 were objected to as containing minor informalities; Claims 1 and 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over by Hibi (U.S. Patent No. 5,546,191) in view of Shimizaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,160,950, hereinafter Shimizaki); Claims 1 and 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Chotoku et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,728,473, hereinafter Chotoku) in view of Shimizaki; and Claims 6-13 were objected to for depending on a rejected base claim, but were otherwise indicated as including allowable subject matter.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the telephone discussion with Applicants representative on June 20, 2006. During the telephone discussion, the Examiner agreed that Chotoku was not prior art, and that the rejection of Claims 1 and 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Chotoku in view of Shimizaki would be withdrawn.

With respect to the objection of Claim 4, Applicants respectfully submit that the cancellation of Claim 4 renders the objection moot. Furthermore, Applicant notes that Claims 8 and 12, which now include the subject matter of Claim 4, are amended to recite that the program is executable by a computer.

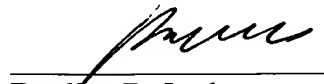
With respect to the objection to Claims 10-13, these claims are amended to more clearly recite and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Claims 10-13 all recite "said evaluation value representing a degree of importance of the representative image." Accordingly, this ground for objection is believed to have been overcome. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, allowable claims 6-13 are rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, the present application is in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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